

in the Editor's Handwritten Copy
OXFORD TRACTS UNMASKED:

BEING THE

SECOND BUT SUPPRESSED

LETTER OF CLERICUS

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LEEDS INTELLIGENCER,

IN WHICH

SOME OF THE WORST ERRORS OF POPEY ARE DETECTED,
AND THEIR DANGEROUS TENDENCY EXPOSED,

BY THE REV. MILES JACKSON, LEEDS.

TO WHICH ARE APPENDED

HIS FIRST LETTER,

AND THE

REPLY OF A WRITER IN THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.

"To the Law and the Testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no Light in them." Isa. viii. 20.

"There must be Heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." 1 Cor. xi. 19.

"Their word will eat as doth a canker." 2 Tim. ii. 17.

"Cease my Son to hear the instruction that causeth to err from the words of knowledge." Prov. xix. 27.

L O N D O N :

HATCHARD & SON, PICCADILLY; AND L. & G. SEELEY, FLEET STREET
R. INCHBOLD, 62, BRIGGATE, LEEDS.

1838.

P R E F A C E.

A LETTER, of which the following is a copy in a somewhat altered condition, was sent to the Editor of the *Leeds Intelligencer*. A day or two before it was expected to appear in that Journal, I was informed, on what seemed to me good authority, that a certain party had decided it should not appear. This, however, seemed so incredible an act of unfairness, that it was treated as an idle report, which might naturally enough have originated in the circumstance, that the party who was represented as having resolved to suppress it, might well be conceived to be interested in its suppression. This intelligence, however, was soon confirmed by the Editor returning the Letter, after having allowed me for a whole week to entertain the expectation that it should be inserted. I need not say that the party in question using their influence, either directly or indirectly, for its suppression, could not more fully betray their want of confidence in their own views to which that Letter was opposed. In this transaction I see nothing to excite my surprise, but the unfairness of their dealing: for their sentiments will not bear the test of Scripture; and they know that no other criterion is satisfactory to a Protestant Public.

OXFORD TRACTS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE LEEDS INTELLIGENCER.

SIR,

A Gentleman who subscribes himself A WRITER IN THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES, has attempted to answer a few questions which I had taken the liberty of respectfully putting to the Rev. J. C. Franks, Vicar of Huddersfield, on the subject of these tracts. With your permission, I will make some observations on his answers.

FIRST.—In proof that not every one who is baptised, whether infant or adult, is born of God, I had quoted the words of St. John, “Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world;” and again, “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin;” for this cannot be said, in any sense however qualified, of all who are baptized.

How does my opponent answer this? Not by attempting to shew that I misunderstand St. John, but by appealing to the Fathers!! So the Fathers who, it is well known, often write in a way that justly exposes them to the charge of intellectual driveling, are to be preferred as teachers of Re-

ligion, to the inspired Apostles!! This Writer does not contend that the Apostles taught that all baptized infants are born of God, but that “*this Doctrine was unquestioned since the times of the Apostles, for a period of fifteen hundred years,*” that is, till the Reformation.

For the sake of argument let it be granted, that it was unquestioned for so long a time. What then? Does it follow that the Doctrine is true? If there were heresies, even in the times of the Apostles, as St. Paul asserts, (1 Cor. xi. 19.) might there not be heresies in the times of those who immediately succeeded them? Must not all Doctrines however ancient, and how long soever unquestioned, be tested by the word of God? “If they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them,” (Isa. viii. 20.) If the word of God is not to be the test of truth, every ancient error must be transmitted as sound Doctrine from generation to generation, and there is no remedy.

In Dr. Hook’s Farewell Sermon at Coventry, we have the following passage to the truth of which I cordially subscribe. Its truth however is fatal to the Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration:—
 “Religion is not as Science—something that admits of discovery—it is something once, and once for all, delivered to the saints, which is to be *preserved*, not discovered—so that the probability

“always is that what is most ancient is in this respect most true.” “New lights we cannot have.” Now I ask which is the most ancient, the Doctrine of the Fathers, or the Doctrine of the Apostles? But this is not a subject of *comparison* merely. That of the Apostles is absolutely true; that of the Fathers, when opposed to it, absolutely false. That of the Apostles is the most ancient, and what is of much greater consequence, it is the infallible teaching of Divine Inspiration. That of the Fathers, when not in agreement with it, is a perversion of the word of God. It was something “*New*” too; and “New lights we cannot have.”

If this Writer in the Tracts wishes his sentiments to be thought in accordance with the Church of England, why does he not notice my argument from the Rite of Confirmation, which I had stated to be so constructed, as to make the proof of Regeneration required by the Church, to hinge not upon Baptism, but the renewal of the Baptismal Vow in the presence of God? I had said that “that Rite is “so cautiously constructed that the Bishop does “not pray for those who are about to be confirmed, “on the supposition that they are Regenerate, till “he has ascertained their Regeneration, as far as “he can, by witnessing, in answer to his own “solemn interrogatory, the renewal of their Baptismal Vow in the presence of God; and that “had the Church intended to teach that all are

“Regenerated in Baptism, the Bishop’s praying
 “for the candidates as Regenerate would not have
 “been made thus to depend upon their *Oath* that
 “they *renew their Baptismal Vow*.” And I may
 add that there is a manifest want of design very
 unworthy of the wisdom of our Reformers in *first*
putting them upon their Oath, and then immediately
 praying for them as Regenerate, unless their Oath
 was intended to be considered as a necessary
 evidence of their Regeneration. And further,
 if the distinction which is made by many between
 Regeneration and Conversion were valid, the
 Bishop after witnessing the renewal of their Vow,
 would have been directed to pray for them not as
 Regenerate, but *Converted* persons ; the renewal
 of their Vow in that case not being necessary to
 prove *Regeneration*, for that is assumed to have
 taken place in their Baptism as infants. I challenge
 the Oxford Tract Writer to answer this argument.
 After this, I am justified in saying that the Church
 of England gives heed to no such “*old wives’ fable*,”
 as that all who are baptized are born of God.—She
 only pronounces them regenerate on the charitable
 supposition that adults have repented and believed,
before they were baptized ; and that infants will
 repent and believe, when they come to age.—She
 calls them “members of Christ, children of God and
 “inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven,” and “in
 “a state of salvation,” only *when they think them-*

selves bound to believe and do, what their Godfathers and Godmothers promised for them in Baptism if infants, and what they have promised in their own name, if adults. If this Writer reflected that to be born of God is to be a new creature, that old things are passed away and all things are become new, he would see the folly of contending that all baptised infants are born of God, seeing multitudes of these live without having any fear of God before their eyes. He would see also the awful and fatal delusion of baptized infidels, profligates and formalists being instructed by their spiritual guides, to believe themselves Regenerate, and consequently entitled to be addressed in the character of *Saints*.

The following extracts from Dodsworth on Baptism, shew in the most striking manner the dilemma in which the advocates of Baptismal Regeneration are placed when they have regard to consistency :—"When we come to compare the language of Scripture "with the actual state in which Christians are living, and in which "they have lived from their youth up, there certainly does appear a "gross and palpable inconsistency. 'Think of addressing those who "are living in every kind of worldly folly and frivolity ; who are the "frequenters of those amusements which the world has invented to "encourage vanity, to pander to a refined licentiousness, and to estrange the heart and affections from God, as *Saints*; by a name "which they themselves will ridicule.' 'Think of addressing those "as faithful Brethren in Christ, as quickened together with Him, "and sitting in heavenly places in Him, who are addicted to intemperance and lust, or who may be denying the fundamental truths "of the Bible.' 'It can be scarcely a subject of surprise, that an "inconsistency so palpable as this should forcibly strike the mind, "and suggest a difficulty with respect to the initiatory Rite of the

“Christian Church.’ ‘To all outward appearance the individual
 “comes out of the waters of Baptism even as he went down into
 “them, and the change which has passed upon his soul is confessedly
 “secret and invisible.’ ‘Undoubtedly those difficulties are very
 “great. It requires a large exercise of faith to uphold the efficacy
 “of Baptism in the face of the fact that to all appearance thousands
 “and hundreds of thousands derive no benefit from it.’ ‘It calls
 “for the faith of Abraham who, against hope, believed in hope.’”—
Dodsworth on Baptism.

This is a very candid statement of the Writer’s difficulties. And his proposed manner of obviating difficulties by exercising Faith is scriptural. But the Scriptures require us to believe nothing that is not true. If Mr. Dodsworth cannot prove it to be true, that they who “are addicted to intemperance
 “and lust, or who deny the fundamental truths of
 “the Bible, and ridicule the name of Saints,” are SAINTS indeed, I shall not attempt to surmount the difficulty which he has to contend with by believing that this is true. I have no ground for believing it as true, I have the strongest reason for rejecting it as false. If being addicted to intemperance and lust, and ridiculing the name of Saint be sin, an inspired Writer has reiterated the truth that “who-
 “soever sinneth, hath not seen Him, neither known
 “him; that he who doeth not righteousness is not
 “of God; that he who is born of God doth not
 “commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him, and
 “he cannot sin because he is born of God; nay
 ‘that he who committeth sin is of the Devil.” How

the same persons can be of the Devil, and yet born of God, and Saints, I cannot conceive, neither can any one whose mind is not sophisticated by taking the Fathers rather than the Apostles for his spiritual guides.

In advocating the Doctrine that all baptised infants are born of God, *this Writer in the Tracts* virtually contends that all or nearly all who are born of God, “*fall from Grace* ;” for he cannot deny that after Baptism, they live in general as those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of His Son. But that nearly all who are born of God, made partakers of the Divine Nature, and created in Christ Jesus unto Good Works should fall from Grace, and render their new Birth, their new Creation, their participation in the Divine Nature vain, is an extravagant and incredible opinion. St. Peter’s declaration that they are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of *incorruptible*, by the Word of God which liveth and *abideth for ever* ; St. John’s assurance that his seed *remaineth* in them, and they cannot sin, because they are born of God ; and St. Paul’s established principle that “whom he justifies (and consequently regenerates) he also *glorifies*,” make it quite clear, that falling from Grace is, to say the least, not the Rule but the exception, whereas this Writer makes it not the exception but the Rule.

What then becomes of that extreme opinion of

the Oxford Tract Writers that the Sacraments are the only means of Grace? According to their own contradictory views, the Grace which they are said so certainly to convey is, it seems, not that Grace which the Scriptures describe, and in the strength of which neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the Love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, but only that spurious kind of goodness which, like the morning cloud and early dew, goeth away. Will the Reader allow me to digress a moment to show how unfounded this opinion is? I ask then in what part of the Word of God is this notion to be found? Who can point to any text that either asserts or implies it? Then test it by any text that speaks of the Grace of God. When St. Paul says "By Grace are ye saved through Faith," does he intimate that Faith can be exercised and Grace received *only in the Sacraments*? When Christ prays, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth," does he add that the truth can sanctify only when we *receive the Sacrament*? When St. John says "If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," does he tell us that our confessions will avail *only when we are in the act of receiving the Lord's Supper*? When we are exhorted "to pray without ceasing," are we cautioned against expecting an answer to prayer except in *receiving the Eucharist*?

It would be easy to multiply to an indefinite extent appeals to the Word of God, by which the superstition and folly of this notion would appear. But I leave this to the Reader. Let him test it by any passage of Scripture he pleases, and he will be more inclined to smile at the unparalleled imbecility of its advocates, than waste his time in exposing it. It is not however a subject for contempt. If there are men who would compass sea and land to make one proselyte to this opinion, by which he would be induced to eat and drink his own damnation, and thus sin away all sensibility of conscience, till it would be impossible to renew him to repentance, this superstition concerning the Sacraments, by which multitudes are ensnared to their eternal ruin, if the Reader has any regard for the welfare of an immortal soul, will turn his laughter "into mourning, and his mirth into heaviness."

This ignorant and dangerous notion, which tends to the undervaluing and neglecting of all means of grace save the Sacraments, and to the abuse of the Lord's Supper, by encouraging men to eat that Bread and drink that Cup, before they have the Grace of God, in order that they may obtain Grace, is falsified by the daily experience of every man who lives a godly and a Christian life; for while he receives Grace once a month perhaps through the channel of the Sacrament, he receives it every day of his existence in the use of other

means; for he comes continually to the Throne of Grace, and “obtains mercy and finds grace to help in time of need.”

I hope it is unnecessary to say that it is far from my object to undervalue the Sacrament. “It “is an outward and visible sign of an inward “and spiritual grace given unto us, ordained by “Christ himself, as *a* means whereby we receive “the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof.” —(*Church Catechism*.) “Sacraments ordained of “Christ, be not only badges or tokens of Christian “men’s profession, but rather, they be certain sure “witnesses, and effectual signs of grace, and God’s “good-will towards us, by the which he doth work “invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also “*strengthen* and *confirm* our faith in him.” (*Article xxv*.) These quotations, while they show that the Sacraments are means and pledges of Grace, are far from conveying the idea that they are the only means. And the following answer to the last question in the Catechism proves that Divine Grace must be possessed in its sanctifying influence before the Lord’s Supper can be rightly received.

Question.—What is required of them who come to the Lord’s Supper.

Answer.—“To examine themselves whether “they repent them truly of their former sins, sted- “fastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively “faith in God’s mercy through Christ, with a

“thankful remembrance of his death, and be in
“charity with all men.”

If these words describe a state of Grace, (and no words can describe it more accurately,) it is evidently opposed to the Doctrine of the Church of England to say that no Grace can be received but through the Sacraments; for here Grace is stated to be the *Qualification* for receiving the *Lord's Supper*.

But to return from this digression. The Oxford Tract Writers teach that the Grace of Baptism which they think is always received but so generally lost, is seldom recovered; that there is no forgiveness for any one who sins *more than once* after Baptism! “no second remission; that baptismal purity, “if once soiled, cannot be altogether restored; for “there is no second Regeneration, that is, no second “Baptism; no re-formation; no restoration to our “former state, yea, though we seek this most earnestly, with many groans and tears; that if, after “Baptism any be tempted by the Devil, and sin, he “has *one* repentance; but if he sin again and “repent, it will not avail.” Let it be remarked that this is their own quotation from one of those Fathers whom they so exalt and revere. But if such Doctrine be true, what becomes of the countless millions of baptised infants who, after Baptism, sin *more than once*, yea, daily, hourly, continually, for many years? Is there no remission for these, *even if they repent*?

Is this the gospel of Christ?—Can this be called good tidings of great joy?—Is this abundantly pardoning?—(Isa. lv. 7.) Who can give any weight to the opinions of the Fathers after reading the above passage?—Who will care for *tradition*?—Who will value such *Catholic faith as this*?—Who will believe that the holy Church throughout the world has always held this Doctrine?—Who will think it necessary to consult *History* in order to ascertain the meaning of the word God?—What Sunday School Child of ordinary capacity is not qualified to pronounce upon the absurdity of such a sentiment?

But we need not read the Fathers to discover instances of a slumbering intellect on this subject. One of the most popular preachers of the Oxford Tract Doctrines, tells us in a Farewell Sermon, to which an allusion has already been made, that “In “Regeneration God supplies the *sap* to every “branch of his vine; that gradual Conversion is “the *growth*; and Sanctification and Renovation “the fruit.” And yet while the pen is in his hand, and the thought is warm in his breast, he tells us further that “In the case of an Heathen, Conver- “sion *precedes* Regeneration; and that the Church “of England in the ministration of Baptism to such “as are of riper years, requires Conversion as a “*qualification* for Regeneration!” that is, according to his own showing, that the branch grows, and

bears fruit unto perfection, *before God supplies it with sap!!*

This is a style of writing and thinking worthy of any one whose taste leads him to devote his days and nights to the Fathers rather than the word of God. Solecisms in writing and absurdities in Doctrine can be learnt in no other School with equal facility and success. Who but an exclusive Reader of the Fathers is capable of such a conception as that of a branch growing and bearing fruit, while it is destitute of sap?

SECOND.—The Church of England teaches that Repentance whereby they forsake sin, and Faith whereby they believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament, are required of persons to be baptized; and that infants are baptized because they promise Repentance and Faith by their sureties, which promise when they come to age themselves are bound to perform. And thus again the proof of their Regeneration is made to depend not on their Baptism but on their Repentance and Faith; because without Repentance and Faith, they are not entitled to Baptism, and consequently cannot have the Regeneration of which water in Baptism is the outward visible sign, nor the justification which belongs to the regenerate, and which the Scriptures, and the Church ascribe not to Baptism, nor to works, but entirely to Faith alone. This presents a difficulty to my opponent's Popish

notion that all are "*justified in Baptism.*" How does he get over it?—By unceremoniously setting aside the authority of the Church of England, and by setting up that of St. Augustine, who says, that "since infants are not capable of faith, the Sacrament of Baptism is to them instead of Faith!" Thus Baptism is made the qualification for Baptism!! On another occasion we were told by an Abettor of the Oxford Tracts that "the *Innocence* of infants is the qualification!" So that in order to obtain Regeneration, they must first be innocent; which is more than they will be after they are regenerate! for Regeneration falls far short of innocence. This is nearly as bright an imagination as that of a branch growing without sap! But if the Fathers, as we have seen, are preferred to the Apostles, it is no wonder they are exalted above the Reformers of our Church. Who then, are the true Churchmen; those who prefer the Fathers to the Apostles and the Church of England; or those who prefer the Apostles and the Church of England to the Fathers?

THIRD.—This Writer very incautiously *denies* that the Oxford Tract Writers advocate the opinion that there would be no impropriety in administering the Lord's Supper to a dying, insensible person, or even to an infant. Has he forgotten that Mr. Newman declares that Cyprian who administered the Lord's Supper to infants, was in his estimation

a better interpreter of the Scripture Doctrine of the Sacraments than even the best Divines of this Day? *Writing from Oxford*, I wonder how Mr. Newman's recorded opinion should have escaped him ! But if such a "superstition had the sanction "of primitive practice," as Mr. Newman states, of what value are primitive practices and primitive opinions, unless they are supported by the word of God? To administer the Eucharist to infants was an ignorant and preposterous superstition in Cyprian, and a most degrading profanation of that Holy Ordinance, instituted as it was, for a remembrance of the Lord's death to our great and endless comfort.

FOURTH.—According to this Writer, "there is "no notion of Transubstantiation in * *making* Bread "and Wine the Body and Blood of Christ. The "Elements only become to us, and convey "to us the Body and Blood of Christ." But if the Elements *become* to us the Body and Blood of Christ, they *are* the Body and Blood of Christ ; they are transubstantiated. If this Writer and other Writers in the Oxford Tracts really think

* It has been the fashion amongst some Abettors of the Oxford Tracts to say that in charging them with professing to have the gift of making Bread and Wine the Body and Blood of Christ, we misrepresent them. But here is a Writer in the Tracts not denying the truth of the charge, but very unsuccessfully attempting to explain it away.

that no Transubstantiation takes place, why use such Popish language as that “to us is committed
 “the *mysterious gift of making Bread and Wine*
 “*the Body and Blood of Christ?*” If the language of our Church conveys all that they mean, why not use it? She tells us, that “If with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy
 “Sacrament, then we * *spiritually* eat the Flesh of
 “Christ, and drink his Blood.” Why not be satisfied with this way of speaking? And why not distinctly admit, what our Church asserts, that
 “the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in
 “their very natural substances?” This Writer’s silence upon this point is the more remarkable, because I *reminded* him of this rubrical declaration. So long, therefore, as he and others prefer the Popish to the Protestant phraseology, do they leave an impression on the mind of the Reader, that they hold sentiments on this subject which they have not nerve to utter as honest Papists do. The Oxford Tract Doctrine, however, cannot easily be misunderstood. “*To us is committed the mysterious gift of MAKING Bread and Wine the Body*

* In this *spiritual* sense, our Church declares, the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken, and received by the faithful in the Lord’s Supper. And in this sense except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink his Blood, we have no life in us; in this sense, whoso eateth His Flesh and drinketh His Blood hath eternal life. For His Flesh is meat indeed, and His Blood is drink indeed.

“*and Blood of Christ.*” The *mystery*, you observe, does not lie in the act of *receiving* the Body and Blood of Christ, through the medium of consecrated Bread and Wine, but in the power committed to the priest of *making* Bread and Wine the Body and Blood of Christ! Thus every time the priest administers the Lord’s Supper, is he virtually represented as creating by his own mysterious gift his own Creator and Redeemer out of Bread and Wine!!! Blessed be God, the Church of England countenances no such priest-craft.

FIFTH—With regard “to the Keys of Heaven and Hell being intrusted to us,” which the Oxford Tract Writers teach; as this Writer says nothing on the point at issue between Protestants and Papists, I beg leave to ask him whether he does not think the absolution of the priest necessary to salvation? Does he really think that the words, in any form of absolution which the Church of England prescribes, are as true in the mouth of a layman, a woman, or a child, as when pronounced by a priest, an archbishop, or even an archangel? If he does, what honor, wisdom or utility is there in boasting of the possession of the Keys? The boast implies something which this Writer is unwilling to avow. The Oxford Tracts, it is said, are designed to revive obsolete, and almost forgotten Doctrines. But it is not an obsolete or almost forgotten Doctrine that God pardoneth and absolveth

all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy gospel. It is a Doctrine that is proclaimed without ceasing. Therefore the boast that “to us “are intrusted the Keys of Heaven and Hell,” must comprehend more than the mere power of declaring in what state of mind God forgives sinners. It must mean, if it mean anything, that the forgiveness of sin by Almighty God, depends in some way, upon the absolution of *a priest in the Apostolical Succession* ! This would seem to be another instance of these Writers being ashamed, in some circumstances, to avow their opinions.

SIXTH.—I had asked if it were only a questionable opinion that *the Church does not preach Scripture, but traditionary, or Catholic truth; and then refers to Scripture as the final test of truth; and that after all, she does not suffer Scripture to speak but as tradition or Catholic truth interprets and dictates* ? This is not indeed the way in which they state their views, but I shall prove it is what they actually do. But can the Reader believe that this Writer has first altered the above sentence, so as to make it arrant non-sense, and then said, he does not understand it? He changes the words *final test* for *first tests*, by which change the sentence is utterly unintelligible. For the truth of this charge let the Reader consult the *Intelligencer* for March 3rd, and March 10th. My meaning in that sentence may thus be made plain.—If Scrip-

ture should contradict traditionary or Catholic truth, then they *gag* and silence Scripture ; and traditionary or Catholic truth, as it is called, has all her own way. But let the Reader have a specimen of this ; and one which this discussion furnishes. These Writers tell us, that traditionary or Catholic truth, teaches that every infant who has been baptized, and therefore however wicked, atheistical, and diabolical he may be as a man, is regenerate, but has fallen from grace. Scripture teaches, as I have already shown, and as they cannot deny, that every one who is born of God doth not commit sin, and that to say the least, falling from grace is not the Rule but the exception, seeing that whom God justifies he also glorifies. Here then tradition and Scripture are at variance. What is to be done? Why, “as it has never been questioned “since the times of the Apostles that all baptized “infants are born of God, at least never questioned “for a period of fifteen hundred years,” therefore Scripture is set at nought and entirely disregarded ! St. Peter, St. John, and St. Paul, and I might add St. James also are all of no account in comparison with the Fathers ! This compels me to believe in the possibility of what I deemed at one time incredible, viz :—that when such Writers in their Pastoral capacity hold private religious meetings with their parishioners, as some of them do, *the Bible is excluded ! and Catholic truth, or what the Church saith, instead of what the Scriptures teach*

is the unvarying and everlasting burden of the song ! Wherein do such men differ from the Papists in their use of the word God ?

This Writer “challenges any one to produce “a single point in which the Church Catholic has “agreed, and yet been in error.” I have just produced a point, and one of vital importance too, in which what *he* calls the Church Catholic has, according to his own account agreed, and yet been in opposition to St. John, St. Peter, and St. Paul, and therefore has been in error : and that error is gross and dangerous in the extreme.

SEVENTH.—I had asked whether it was only a *questionable* opinion that the Church of Rome who, as it is agreed among all Protestants, is denounced in Scripture as *Antichrist, Babylon, the Man of sin, and the Mother of Harlots*, is a *true Church*, but that all Protestant Churches which are not under Episcopal Government are no Churches, and are not in covenant with God ? As this question involves one of those opinions that must not be openly and everywhere avowed, but cautiously insinuated, and “*brought in privily*,” as heresies generally are, it *remains without an answer !* This writer does not tell us whether the Church of Rome is a true Church or not, and whether the Protestant Churches which are not Episcopal, are, or are not, true Churches. This *Friend at Oxford* seems to know that the time has not yet come, when it would be prudent to publish in Leeds

what we know the Oxford Tract Writers really hold ; that the Papacy is a true Church, because it is in the "*Apostolical Succession*,"* though she has corrupted the Doctrines of the Apostles ; but that the

* The Jews boasted of their descent from Abraham, as these Writers do of their Apostolical Succession. What saith the Baptist to them ? "Begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our Father, for God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." And what said our blessed Lord himself to them ? "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." Reiterated boasts of Apostolical Succession, and the assumption that the presence of Christ is limited to Ministers Episcopally Ordained, are as childish as they are illiberal. To how many who have been in the Apostolical Succession might the words of Christ be addressed, "Ye are of your father the Devil.—He was a murderer from the beginning." How many have been murdered for their love and defence of the truth, by those who were in the Apostolical Succession ! The Apostolical Succession, unconnected with Apostolical Doctrine, sincerity and truth, is a ground not of pride and arrogance, but of shame and contempt. And the perpetual boast of it tends to make our Church odious in the eyes of multitudes, who might otherwise revere her. They who argue that the performance of a miracle is necessary to prove that God sanctions the ministry of those who have not been Episcopally Ordained, should reflect that their opponents might argue with equal reason that a miracle is wanted to shew that they who *have* been thus ordained are exclusively in possession of the Divine sanction : for all Apostles wrought miracles.—Common sense, to say nothing of piety, will lay more stress upon sound Doctrine than Episcopal Ordination. Is it reasonable to suppose that Christ has promised to be with any of those "*who corrupt the Word of God*," even to the end of the world ? Can such men pretend that they have Christ's commission ? Surely in such cases, the Bishops have neglected the Apostle's caution, "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins : keep thyself pure." All Bishops are liable to mistake. They have ordained Socinians. Was Christ with those Socinians ?

Presbyterian Church of Scotland and all Reformed Churches on the Continent are *no* Churches, because they are *not* in the Apostolical Succession, or under the government of Bishops, however Apostolical their Doctrine, and however godly, righteous and sober may be the lives of thousands and tens of thousands who belong to them! He therefore softens his language, and instead of telling us that they must “*be left to the uncovenanted mercies of God,*” an expression which means nothing short of the wrath of God, and the vengeance of eternal fire, contents himself with saying much that amounts to nothing, as an answer to my question, whether they are true Churches or not.—Moreover, he takes no notice of my remark that the Church of England, in her prayer for all conditions of men, “*identifies the Catholic Church with all who profess and call themselves Christians.*” And Jeremy Taylor’s opinion, who was a very Shakspeare in Divinity, that “the Faith to which God promises Heaven is “the Faith which makes us Members of the “Catholic Church,” he finds it prudent equally to pass over without observation. These are authorities to which it would be fatal to stand conspicuously opposed. But his expressive silence is well understood. He dare not *contradict* them. He dare not *agree* with them! What must be any man’s confidence in his own sentiments when

he finds them so contrary to his own Church and to the Word of God that he is afraid to utter them? And where is his candor?

But are not the Oxford Tract Writers Ministers of Religion? Does not the Writer therefore eat the Bread of the Church? And if so, is he not bound to adhere to her Doctrines, or else quit her Communion? For any man in the character of a Protestant Minister, and under the cloak of zeal against Popery to propagate some of the worst doctrines of Popery, is to act in a manner that I will not trust myself to designate, by the terms that most appropriately and most justly describe his career.

Catholic Truth (if by that is meant the Truth which is held by the Church of Christ throughout the world) is one thing, and Popish Doctrine is another, as much opposed to it as darkness is to light. But in some persons' mouths these are made to mean the same. Let the unlearned then understand, that from whomsoever they hear continually of *Catholic* Truth, or *traditionary* Truth, instead of *Scripture* Truth, they are in general hearing *Popish Error*; and that when they hear much of what the *Church* teaches, instead of what *Christ or his Apostles* teach, they are then hearing not what is taught by the Reformed Church of England, but by the superstitious Church of Rome; and that if they receive it, they are in a state of

training, to become Papists without difficulty and without opposition.

To conclude.—From the circumstance that the Doctrines I have been here combating are very much the same as those which are held by a popular clergyman in the neighbourhood, it may probably be thought that I consider him the Writer of the Letter in the *Intelligencer*, on the 10th of March, to which this is my reply. I beg, therefore, to remark, that the Reader must endeavour to consider any similarity or co-incidence he may observe between the sentiments, the style of language, the line of argument, and even the spirit of the two writers, as perfectly accidental; and for this plain reason, that the one subscribes himself *a Writer in the Tracts for the Times*, and the other has declared that he never had anything to do with those Tracts, and does not wish to undertake their defence. This circumstance has enabled me to speak my mind without any apprehension of giving just cause for offence, as I felt myself at liberty to conclude, that I could not in such a case, consistently with the veracity of one of the parties, be supposed personal to the one, nor even conjecture the name of the other. I have, however, no wish to shrink from the task of repudiating the errors that are common to both. I was ordained a Minister, on the express condition most solemnly required and agreed to, that I should

“be ready with all faithful diligence to banish
 “and drive away all erroneous and strange
 “Doctrines contrary to God’s Word.” The
 Minister that propagates errors, and the Minister
 that suffers them to be propagated without oppo-
 sition, equally betray their office, violate their
 ordination vow, and sacrifice the cause of Christ,
 and the best interests of the people committed to
 their charge. I should feel myself a renegade
 and an apostate if, from the fear of man, or regard
 to the praise of men, or with a view to my own
 interest, popularity, or any earthly consideration
 whatever, I either abetted such errors, or did not
 sincerely and actively oppose them. Union
 amongst the Clergy, on any basis but that of the
 Truth as it is in Jesus, were a conspiracy of
 perjured priests. To his own Master indeed
 every man standeth or falleth, and God is able to
 uphold him. But the God of Truth will not up-
 hold any man who connives at erroneous Doctrines,
 when he is bound by office and by oath to drive
 them away. Every Clergyman who has either the
 conscience and principle of a Christian, or the
 honor and feelings of a gentleman, will deem it
 his duty to be “valiant for the truth,” and his
 deepest disgrace to turn his back in the day of
 battle.

Let no man flinch from the discharge of this
 duty on the too modest ground that he is not

qualified for its performance. A very stripling in the armor of Truth is stronger than a giant in all the panoply of error. David's sling, when used in the name of the Lord, is more effective than Goliath's sword. It is inconceivable how weak and vacillating the Champions of error are. An Infidel may sometimes prove to be a formidable opponent; but the advocate of false Doctrine, seeing he appeals to the same standard of Truth as yourself, will generally be found, on all points involving the fundamental Verities of our Faith, a very child in argument. The advocates of the Oxford Tract Doctrines are indeed peculiarly characterised by the very small exhibition of their argumentative powers and acquaintance with the oracles of God. How seldom do they make a manly appeal to reason, to their own Church, to the Scriptures, or to anything but the Fathers! With a supercilious air of Popish infallibility, they seem to think that one fancy of the Fathers and their own unsupported assertion, are worth a thousand arguments and ten thousand declarations of Scripture employed by their opponents. What then can account for the progress of their opinions? They appeal to the pride of Churchmen. It is assumed that the Ministers of the Establishment are the men, and wisdom shall die with them: in their hands only, the Gospel and the Sacraments have any efficacy: with them,

alone, Christ has promised to be present. This, in these times of political excitement, proves a snare to those Ministers and Members of the Establishment, who have more of the spirit of party, than of the spirit of godliness. Besides, the habit of not thinking seriously on religious subjects, which so generally prevails, utterly disqualifies the bulk of men to judge for themselves. These things (to say nothing of the influence of that enemy who at all times blinds the eyes of them that believe not) may well account for the spread of opinions which appeal to the pride, the party spirit, and the ignorance of the public on matters of religion.

They are opinions which have nothing to recommend them to men of either understanding or piety. Reason, common sense, and experience are against them. The Doctrine of the Church of England as exhibited in her Liturgy, Articles, Homilies and Catechism is against them. The Doctrine of all Protestant Churches throughout the world is against them. And the inspired Scriptures from beginning to end are all opposed to them. The corrupt Church of Rome only is in accordance with them. Their direct tendency is to make men satisfied with their present state of heart, provided only they abound in ceremonial observances.

The Doctrines of Baptismal Regeneration and

Sacramental Justification, by blinding persons who are evidently destitute of godliness to their need of a change of nature and of state, and by making them a generation that are pure in their own eyes, though they are not yet washed from their filthiness, so bind them with the chain of their sins, that just in proportion to their consistency in thinking, are they incapable of taking one single step in the pursuit of that new birth, and justification from all things, without which no man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Justification by faith, a Doctrine so essential, that, according to Luther, a standing or a falling Church is indicated by the degree of stress that is laid upon it, is thus renounced; and the justifying faith which works by love, purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and works righteousness, and without which it is impossible to please God, is repudiated as gross fanaticism, and superseded by a formal observance of the Lord's Supper ! What then must be the state of those who really believe that they have been both regenerated and justified in their infant Baptism ? And what can be the condition of those who dream that Grace can be received only through the Sacraments, and therefore do not "purify themselves, in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren;" and who cannot, consistently with their own views, seek Grace by prayer and supplication ? But if the

Writers and Abettors of these Tracts really believe that the Sacraments are the only channels of Divine Grace, why do they use the Liturgy of our Church; why have they family prayer and private devotions? If they use not these as means of grace, for what purpose do they use them? In words at least, they pray for Grace: but will they avow that they say one thing to God in prayer, and mean another? Whether therefore they act consistently or inconsistently with their notion that the Sacraments only convey Grace, sin is the inevitable consequence. In the former case, they disobey the exhortation to pray without ceasing; and in the latter, they apply to God for Grace through one channel, when they believe they can receive it only through another!

Equally sinful in its tendency is the opinion that to us are intrusted the Keys of Heaven and Hell. Does it not stand in the way of a penitent's direct application to God through the mediation of his Son? Does it not hinder and retard his consolation and hope? Does it not divert his attention from the ministry of reconciliation to the ambassador for Christ? Does it not give the priest a power and authority which do not belong to him? Has not such power when usurped always been abused? Has it not led to the greatest superstition and bondage on the part of the people; and to pride and arrogance on that of the priest; to

the selling of indulgences, and dispensations, and prayers for the dead ?

And not less sinful is the tendency of the opinion that the priest has the gift of making Bread and Wine the Body and Blood of Christ. It leads directly to superstition and idolatry, and to the awful delusion that the wicked who receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper receive pardon and peace.

And what is the tendency of preaching tradition rather than Scripture, but to make the Word of God of none effect through such tradition ; and to deaden our sensibility to the wickedness of the Papacy in forbidding the people a free access to the Word of God ?

And what is the tendency of calling the Church of Rome a true Church, and all other Churches which are not under Episcopal Government no Churches, but to give an impression favourable to Popery, and unfavourable to Protestantism ?

Now, I appeal to every man of understanding and reflection, whether these be not the Doctrines of the " MAN OF SIN ; " whether it be not evident that the more cordially they are embraced, the more mischievous must be the result.

No man can satisfactorily defend these Doctrines ; and therefore no man can conscientiously disseminate them. No man can propagate them, after they have been refuted, without renouncing

his claim to integrity and honour. No man can countenance them, without a dereliction of principle, unless he does it ignorantly. It is the duty of every man to oppose them to the utmost of his power. If they are contrary to the Gospel of Christ, then though an Angel from Heaven preach them, the sentence of Almighty God is "*Let him be accursed.*" (Gal. i. 8.) But though God curse, let men beware of cursing,—God has a right to curse both him and all who come not to his help against the mighty, and he will curse them in time and in eternity, unless they repent, and do works meet for repentance. But it is your part while in Christian benigntiy you withstand him to the face, to pray without ceasing that God who converted Saul of Tarsus, when making havock of the Church, and who made him a preacher of the faith which once he destroyed, would extend the same mercy and grace to those who destroy that faith much more effectually by professing to preach it. There has been a most lamentable want of moral courage manifested in not resisting the progress of these false and mischievous Doctrines. Some who ought to have been pillars, have crumbled into dust, and become as silent as the grave. Others have openly abetted them; and by their countenance and support have greatly aided their reception, and weakened the hands, though they could not discourage the heart of those who oppose them in

the name of the Lord. I would charitably hope, however, that they who are without courage, are not without grace; that they are like the honorable Counsellor, Joseph of Arimathea who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews. After the crucifixion of Christ, he went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus. So, these faint-hearted Disciples when they see "*Christ crucified afresh, and put to an "open shame,"*" will then I trust have the boldness to declare their regard for him, in the face of all who, from whatever motives, have taken part against him, or connived at those who did. I thank God that I have not been insensible to the heresies that assail us, nor backward to refute them. I have done this warmly and zealously. My object and my prayer have been that I might speak the Truth in love. And I am conscious that there is no reproach, no inconvenience to which I would not cheerfully and willingly submit, to be an humble instrument in the hands of God in turning any from Darkness to Light. Was Paul an offender when he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed? Did he become the enemy of the Galatian Church because he told them the Truth? I never loved my congregation more affectionately, and I never prayed for them more earnestly, than in these peculiarly sifting times. I trust I can say in the language of

the Apostle, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved."

I hope the time is not very distant when the truth will prevail, and error and superstition, which have made rapid strides amongst us, will be fain to hide their heads. I trust the Divine Blessing on the labors of a brother minister in the town of Leeds, distinguished alike by talents, learning, and humility, whom God has lately stirred up to bear his faithful protest against the Doctrines which I have been combating for months, with a feeble arm, will so crown his exertions with success, that ere long we shall see many looking back with astonishment, sorrow, and shame to the time when they followed an excited and hood-winked multitude, to be fed with the veriest husks of Popery, by those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the Doctrine which we have learned, and who with good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Since I penned the last sentence, I have received the good tidings that another dear and much loved brother has boldly testified against the prevailing heresies. It is the silence, the connivance, and in too many cases, the acquiescence and approbation of the Clergy that mark the strength of the

delusion, and form one of the most awful signs of the times. But if God open the mouths of his Ministers in faithful and temperate opposition, I doubt not, with His Blessing, we shall ultimately triumph in Christ.

I am, your's, &c.,

CLERICUS.

OXFORD TRACTS.

The following are the Letters to which the preceding one refers. I introduce them here because many may read my Pamphlet who have not an opportunity of consulting the Leeds Intelligencer.

REPLY TO THE REV. J. C. FRANKS.

To the Editor of the Intelligencer.

SIR,

As you have admitted into your columns a sentence affecting the orthodoxy of the "Tracts for the Times," in a letter from the Vicar of Huddersfield; have allowed an abettor of these tracts to make a demand upon that gentleman to substantiate his charge; and permitted the latter through the same medium to withdraw his charge, and substitute another that in my opinion compromises the truth; I hope you will extend the same indulgence to a constant reader by inserting the following letter:—

TO THE REV. J. C. FRANKS, M. A., VICAR OF HUDDERSFIELD.

REV. SIR,—In the *Leeds Intelligencer*, published the 10th inst. I observe a letter with your signature, in which you "*lament and deprecate several extreme, and you had almost said heretical opinions advocated by the writers and abettors of the Tracts for the Times.*"

In another letter published the 17th inst. which ought to have contained your deliberate, because it was your corrected judgment, concerning these opinions, you say that all you meant was, that they are "*questionable, if not erroneous.*" Will you allow an obscure brother clergyman to request your reconsideration of a few of these opinions, as I cannot but fear you have inadvertently compromised the truth by this decision, which, from your general character, I am persuaded you would not willingly do. I beg to ask,

1. Is it only a "questionable opinion" that *all who are baptized are born of God*? Let us then hear what the Scripture saith: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world." And again, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." I think you will allow that it is more than questionable, even utterly false, that whosoever is baptized overcomes the world, and does not commit sin. How, then, can all who are baptized be born of God? It is true, the Church of England pronounces all baptized persons, both infants and adults, regenerate; but the Catechism shews that it is in the charitable anticipation that the former will repent and believe when they come of age; and on the

charitable supposition that the latter have repented and believed already, agreeably to their own profession at the time of their baptism: and intimates that without repentance and faith, neither the one nor the other are entitled to baptism. Consequently the regeneration which is supposed to be connected with baptism, cannot take place when repentance and faith are wanting. And in perfect agreement with this, the rite of confirmation is so cautiously constructed that the Bishop does not pray for those who are about to be confirmed on the supposition that they are regenerate, *till he has ascertained their regeneration*, by witnessing, in answer to his own solemn interrogatory, the *renewal* of their baptismal vow, in the presence of God. Had the Church intended to teach that all are regenerated in baptism, the Bishop's praying for the candidates as regenerate, would not have been thus made to hinge upon their *oath* that they *renew their baptismal vow*.

2. Is it only "a questionable opinion," that *all who are baptized are justified*? Justification by faith is the leading doctrine of the Gospel; and is taught in the eleventh article of our Church, and there pronounced to be a most wholesome doctrine. And this is more largely expressed in the Homily on Justification. But as infants have no faith when baptized, how can they be justified? By the faith of proxies? As well might we suppose that they are sanctified by the faith of proxies.

3. Is it only "a questionable opinion," that *the sacrament of the Lord's Supper might without any impropriety be administered to a dying insensible person, or even to an infant*? Our Church tells us that it is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper, "to examine themselves whether they repent truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and be in charity with all men." Is this the work of either an insensible person, or an infant?

4. Is it only "a questionable opinion" that *to us is committed the mysterious gift of making bread and wine the body and blood of Christ*? Our Church at least declares that the sacramental bread and wine still remain in their very natural substances; and that the natural body and blood of our Saviour Christ are in heaven, and not here; it being against the truth of Christ's natural body to be at one time in more places than one."

5. Is it only "a questionable opinion" that *to us are intrusted the keys of heaven and hell*? He that liveth and was dead, and is alive for evermore, declares that *He* hath the keys.

6. Is it only "a questionable opinion" that *the Church does not preach or bear witness to Scripture, but to traditionary or Catholic truth; and then refers to Scripture as the final test of truth; and that, after all, she does not suffer Scripture to speak but as tradition interprets and dictates*?

The Church of England in her form and manner of ordering Priests says not one word to this effect, but on the contrary declares that we "*cannot by any other means* compass the doing of so weighty a work pertaining to the salvation of man, but with *doctrine and exhortation taken out of the Holy Scriptures*....

and that it is by *daily reading and weighing of the Scriptures* we may wax riper and stronger in our Ministry."

7. Is it only "a questionable opinion" that the Church of Rome who, as it is agreed among all Protestants, is denounced in Scripture as Babylon, Antichrist, the Man of Sin, and the Mother of Harlots, is a *true Church*; but that all Protestant Churches, which are not Governed by Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, are *no Churches*, and are *not in covenant with God*? The Church of England in her prayer for all sorts and conditions of men, identifies all who profess and call themselves Christians," with "the Catholic Church." And Bishop Jeremy Taylor, whose opinions few will despise, says, "Whatsoever faith, or belief, that is to which God has promised heaven, that faith makes us members of the Catholic Church."

I am sure, my dear Sir, you cannot deliberately wish that the thirty-thousand souls who are committed to your charge should think that you consider such opinions as these merely questionable. If it would be injurious to the reputation of the writers and abettors of the Tracts for the Times, *almost* to say that their opinions are *heretical*, how much more injurious to the minds of your readers, with whom you have any influence, to call them only "*questionable if not erroneous*!" I think you cannot but admit that they are most dangerous opinions; and that just in proportion to the sincerity with which they are embraced, must they defeat the very end of a Gospel Ministry. That they should receive from a scholar and divine of your authority, a condemnation so faint, that it amounts almost to a sanction, is much to be deplored. And I have no doubt that when you re-consider them, in connection with the duty of contending earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and with your ordination vow, that you would be "ready with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's word, you will again "*lament and deprecate*" them as much as ever. They are certainly papistical opinions, and eat as doth a canker: and if so, we need spend no time in deciding whether they are heretical or not.

I am, Rev. Sir, your's respectfully,

CLERICUS.

February, 27th, 1838.

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We have been favoured by a Correspondent with the following Letter, from a friend at Oxford, in answer to the communication of Clericus, which appeared in last week's *Intelligencer*.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

You wish me to give you a brief answer to Clericus's letter against the Oxford Tracts. I will try to do so; but I must protest against this mode of judging of doctrines. If any one wishes in earnest to know the ancient doctrines advocated in the Tracts, let him read them, or the authorities there referred to, and not take up with second-hand notions of them, as they are stated by persons, who, being of a modern school, cannot understand them.

Clericus asks 1st., "Is it only a questionable opinion that *all who are*

*baptized are born of God?*" The more practical question had been (since our church retains and enjoins infant baptism)—"Are all baptized *infants* born of God?" This is not only unquestionable, but was unquestioned from the Apostles' time down to Zuingli and Calvin. Luther himself retained the doctrine. For the first fifteen centuries of the Christian Church, no *one* teacher ever separated the grace of baptism from the sacrament, except in those cases in which a man receives it hypocritically. Then, it, as well as the other sacrament, might be received to condemnation—(Tract 69, p. 171, s. 99)—"*Baptismal regeneration*" was the doctrine of every writer, and of every liturgy in every church from the Apostles' times to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Then, for the first time, the new doctrine was set up by Zuingli, who, in denying baptismal regeneration, denied also the grace of the sacraments altogether, and made them "mere badges of a Christian man's profession." Our baptismal service is taken almost wholly from the ancient Liturgy, (see Bapt. Liturgy, compared ib. p. 250, 399,) and so has the same meaning. The sentiments of the compilers also are well known; as a popular illustration, the Religious Tract Society, in publishing a work of Cranmer, felt obliged to omit what he says on Baptism, because contrary to their (i. e. the Zuinglian) tenets. Then also in the Catechism our children are one by one taught to say that each child was in its baptism made a member of Christianity, a *child of God*; that "being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby (by the spiritual grace of Baptism) made children of grace:" every child is taught to "thank its Heavenly Father for having called it into this state of salvation through Jesus Christ our Saviour," and "humbly to pray," not that it be brought into any other state, but "that it may continue in the same to its life's end." At Confirmation, the Bishop says in prayer to Almighty God, "who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Holy Ghost." In the Tracts, further, has been published a list of our chief divines (which might readily have been enlarged had there been any object) who so taught (Catina Patrum, No. 2, Tract 76.) Let any one, if he can, bring an equal list of such as taught the contrary, *belonging to the Church*, and to her old and approved writers.

I have said the more on this head, because the doctrine of "Baptismal Regeneration" is the point at which the modern school, following Zuingli and Calvin, parts from the ancient Church, which our own has followed. This school assumes that "a man cannot fall from grace given," and therefore that if a person does not live "as a child of God" he never was a child of God. This is Clericus's main argument. Then he supposes that the Church supposes children to be regenerated, in the charitable supposition that "they will repent and believe when they come of age," i. e. supposes that they are made members of Christ *now*, because they *will* repent and believe hereafter. Who taught us to make Christ's *present* gifts dependent on man's future use of them? People only *remain* children of God if they continue to repent and believe; but not their after repentance and belief, but Christ's gifts first made them so.

2. "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that *all who are baptized are justified*? As infants have no will when baptized, how can they be justified?"

Since children are made "members of Christ" in baptism (Church Cat.), unless they are justified, they must be unjustified members of Christ; members of Christ without being cleansed or forgiven! Since they are not capable of faith, the sacrament of baptism is to them, as St. Aug. says, instead of faith.

3. "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper might without any impropriety be administered to a dying insensible person, ("however consistently pious and believing in his past life") or even to infants." This was not *advocated* in the Tracts; it was only given as an illustration of the difference of our character from that of the early Church, that "most men would now, on the first view of the subject, maintain that to be a superstition which yet had the sanction of primitive practice."

4 "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that to us is committed the mysterious gift of making the bread and wine the body and blood of Christ?" There is no notion of transubstantiation in this: it means (what is expressed in all the ancient Liturgies) that the elements become *to us*, convey *to us*, the body and blood of Christ, and that for this end our ministry is employed. God has chosen to use visible agency in imparting the invisible blessings conveyed through his sacraments. The language "made," &c. is used by Bishop Bull and other reputed writers.

5. "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that to *us are intrusted the keys of heaven and hell*? He that liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore declareth that He hath the keys." So also, as the ancient Fathers say, "He alone baptises, tho' He employs man ministerially to baptise." So He alone also absolveth, tho' He gives to man power and authority to pronounce absolution upon His people when penitent; He alone has the keys, and yet he gave them to St. Peter and with him to the other Apostles and their successors. Hence "the power of the keys" is the ordinary title of that power given to us in ordination, "whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven, and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." And it is by virtue of this authority that we pronounce the absolution, which as Bishop Sparrow observes, is one and the same virtually in the morning service, the communion service, and the visitation of the sick "by Christ's authority committed to us."

6. "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that *the Church does not preach, or bear witness to Scripture, but to the traditionary or Catholic truth, and then refers to Scripture as the first tests of truth, and that, after all, she does not suffer Scripture to speak but as tradition interprets and dictates.*" This is not the language nor doctrine of the tracts, nor do I understand it. What the tracts teach is, that Catholic tradition i. e. the teaching of the universal Church everywhere and all times, is an authoritative interpretation of Scripture whenever we have it; e. g. the creeds, as to the points contained in the creeds; this is authority that Scripture is to be so interpreted not as the Socinian or the Quakers do. Scripture instructs us to hold fast these traditions; and these traditions recognise the superiority of Scripture. The Church of Rome is to be blamed because she has deserted genuine tradition, because she has set up her own acts and particular traditions against the earlier traditions of the universal



Church, just as the followers of Calvin set up the traditionary way of interpreting Scripture which they have received from their master. It has been very merciful that *we* have not been left to find out truth, or interpret Scripture on vital points for ourselves, but have the teaching of the Church Catholic, upon which we may rely amid the strife of conflicting opinions, and inconsistent interpretations. And the universal Church has never been led into error. We challenge any one to produce any point on which the Church Catholic has agreed, and yet been in error.

This is a great comfort, and a rest to one's foot, as every one may find who will try.

7. "Is it only a "questionable opinion" that the Church of Rome is a *true Church*, but all Protestant Churches, which are not governed by bishops, priests, and deacons, are no Churches, and are not in *covenant with God*?" This again is not the language of the tracts: they have not pronounced upon those bodies who have abandoned episcopacy. Undoubtedly, since episcopacy is an ordinance of God, to forsake it must be displeasing to Him, and a forfeiture of a blessing; but we have never undertaken to limit God's mercies; those bodies of Christians must be in a very disadvantageous state comparatively because they or their forefathers have abandoned a gift of God, but *how* disadvantageous that state may be, we have not taken upon ourselves to say. But there is no middle way; episcopacy must either be an ordinance of God, (as we know it to be,) or no; Presbyterianism and episcopacy cannot *both* be true, and so certainly, in speaking of the "Church of Scotland," we should mean the Church which, through the bishops and the apostles, descended from Jesus Christ: not that which was set up by men, and is now "established" by man. But we do not thereby say that those who in Scotland have forsaken an ordinance of God, are therefore cut off from all blessings, but the contrary; though, of course, they must have brought loss upon themselves as the whole condition of the non-episcopal Protestant bodies shews.

I wish I could have answered more briefly, but such a range of subjects was scarcely ever brought for animadversion in so few lines, and consequently, of necessity, almost so superficially. The writer in that he speaks of Churches not *governed* by bishops, priests, and *deacons*, shows that he does not know where the points at issue lie.

I remain your's,

A WRITER IN THE TRACTS FOR THE TIMES.















